

FOOTBALL went right up the creek in frustrating style for Wycombe Wanderers, due to play Barking in the F.A. Trophy at Loakes Park on Saturday.

At 10.30 am this, the Wanderers first ever home tie in the competition was definitely on and the public were told this was so.

But at two o'clock, after much work by the club and its supporters to clear snow from some parts of the pitch, referee M. E. Jerney from Woking made another inspection and the game was called off.

He was scared that parts of the pitch, where the snow had been moved, which were thawing, would freeze up when the sun went down and become dangerous.

By then many fans were on their way to the ground.

A notice was put up on the club notice board in the main road, the club's telephones were busy telling the fans that the match was off, but many made the trek to Loakes Park, only to find the gates closed and the match off.

The mistake was moving the snow from around the penalty areas at referee Jerney's request on Saturday morning.

Playing tonight

The match has now been re-arranged for tonight, Tuesday, at 7.45 pm to give Barking additional time to get to Wycombe should there be a rail strike.

The Wanderers, without a game since they played Oxford City on Boxing Day, have kept in full training, in

F.A. Trophy tie is fixed for tonight

fact they had a session on Saturday morning.

After Saturday's 'on-off' tie, the club issued the following statement through secretary John Goldsworthy:

"Wycombe Wanderers F.C. regret any inconvenience that may have been caused to their supporters by the late postponement of their F.A. Trophy match against Barking on Saturday.

"Arrangements were made with the referee to inspect the pitch at 10.30 am on the morning of the match. The referee declared that the pitch under the snow was reasonable and requested that the lines and both penalty areas were cleared of snow. This was carried out to the referee's satisfaction by a hard working group of the club committee and members of the Supporters Club together with some supporters.

"Consequently, the public were informed that the match was definitely on and the Press, radio and television were accordingly informed.

"However, at 2 pm the referee made a further inspection of the pitch and with the frost coming out of the ground in the cleared penalty areas, made an assumption that if the frost

returned as the sun went down, the pitch would become unplayable, he therefore postponed the match.

In good faith

"It must be said that his original decision to play was made in good faith but in the light of the weather forecast

TOUGH DRAW

IT'S A HARD life. If Wycombe Wanderers beat Barking in the F.A. Trophy tonight, they are away to Goole Town or Blythe Spartans. Goole Town beat the Wanderers 2-1 in the competition last year, while Blythe Spartans beat them 1-0 four seasons ago, in the last year of the Amateur Cup, Keith Mead putting through his own goal.

Other local survivors, Slough Town, also have a tough task. Should they beat Woking they are away to Maidstone, F.A. Cup heroes this season, and the side who knocked Wycombe Wanderers out of that competition this time.

of a hard frost and that the sun had brought water to the surface he assumed the game could not be finished without the risk of injury to players. The decision whether to play or not is entirely up to the referee and it has to be accepted that his word is final.

"The referee together with the club, regrets any inconvenience caused to supporters, but his decision, based on the changed con-

ditions later in the afternoon, not to play was made totally from the point of view of safety to the players.

"The club respect the burden placed on the referee and would wish to thank sincerely all those willing workers who helped to clear the pitch.

"The match is scheduled to take place tonight, Tuesday, kick-off 7.45

"Should a replay be necessary it will take place at Barking on Monday, January 22, k.o. 7.45 pm."

The weather hit local sport hard again, but Marlow, Burnham and Amersham Town all played. Junior programmes were badly hit, and rugby games were off.

Because Spratley's Meadow is flooded, Amersham Town's Border Floodlight League game with Wellingborough tonight has been cancelled.

It's double top at Wycombe

THE players of Barking Football Club were in fine form at Loakes Park on Saturday, but it was a pity their winning ways were confined to the dartboard in the bar!

Indeed it was just the kind of shooting practice Barking could have done without, having made the 50 mile trip to Wycombe on the understanding that their FA Trophy tie was a definite starter.

However, the Blues party arrived at Wanderers' ground to find the pitch under several inches of snow except for the goal areas, which had been cleared at the request of referee Mr. Jerney.

Frankly it did not appear remotely playable — but the man in black did not concede that until 45 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off time.

"It would have been a lottery but I just can't understand why he didn't call the game off earlier," lamented Barking chairman Ron Murrant.

Certainly Mr. Murrant's comments were endorsed by a coachload of supporters who also made the fruitless trek to Buckinghamshire. As one of them ruefully reflected: "It's a long way to go for a drink!"

Nevertheless one man in the Blues' party couldn't help smiling when informed of the referee's decision not to go ahead with the tie — centre half Dave Waite.

Although still carrying traces of the back injury he sustained in a recent league match with Tilbury, Waite had been pencilled in to play at Loakes Park. A couple of extra days rest could be all the big man needs to shake off the handicap altogether.

Barking were due to travel to Wycombe again last night.